

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 01008 131328Z

ACTION EA-09

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INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL SONGKHLA

AMCONSUL UDORN

SECSTATE WASHDC 8162

UNCLAS BANGKOK 1008

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS --- JANUARY 7 - 13, 1977

FOR IEA AND ICS/D, CINCPAC FOR USIA ADVISOR, CHIANG MAI AND

UDORN FOR BRANCH PAO, STATE FOR CU/EA

MEDIA CONCERNS:

1. AMERICAN FILM DISTRIBUTORS TO BOYCOTT THAILAND.

CONTRARY TO LAST WEEK'S REPORT, PREPARATIONS ARE NOW GOING AHEAD FOR FULL EXPLOITATION IN THAILAND OF THE NEW "KING KONG," BUT AMERICAN FILM DISTRIBUTORS HAVE REPORTEDLY AGREED TO BOYCOTT THAILAND EFFECTIVE JANUARY 25. THIS MEANS THAT NO AMERICAN COMMERCIAL FILMS WILL ENTER THAILAND AFTER THAT DATE. THE AMERICAN DISTRIBUTORS FEEL THAT THIS STRONG STAND IS NECESSARY TO OVERCOME THAILAND'S NEW PROTECTIVE TAX ON FOREIGN FILMS, BUT THE RTG IS UNLIKELY TO BACK DOWN. THE TAX IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT INDIAN AND CHINESE IMPORTS, WHICH ARE SEEN AS HARMFUL TO THAI-
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PAGE 02 BANGKO 01008 131328Z

LAND'S FLEDGLING FILM PRODUCERS. THAI OBSERVERS HAVE INFORMED THE POST THAT, WHILE THE THAI MARKET REPRESENTS ONLY ABOUT 1 PERCENT OF AMERICAN FILM EXPORT EARNINGS, IT IS A PROFITABLE ONE AND THAT THIS WILL FORCE THE AMERICAN DISTRIBUTORS TO CHANGE THEIR POSITION EVENTUALLY.

2. PRESS REACTION TO RETURN OF FIELD MARSHAL PRAPASS.

THE RETURN OF EXILED STRONGMAN AND FORMER DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAPASS LAST WEEK HAS BEEN FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY ALL BANGKOK NEWSPAPERS, BUT WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT COMMENT. HOWEVER, LARGE NUMBERS OF NEWSMEN HAVE CAMPED OUTSIDE HIS HOME, WAITING IN VAIN FOR A STATEMENT OR INTERVIEW. THE UNREST WHICH FOLLOWED HIS BRIEF RETURN HOME LAST SEPTEMBER HAS BEEN ABSENT.

3. SCATTERED COMMENT IN THE THAI PRESS REVEALS CONTINUED CONCERN ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF US-VIET NAM DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THAILAND. LAST WEEK'S REPORT REFERRED TO AN EDITORIAL REACTION TO UN AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE ANDREW YOUNG'S COMMENT FAVORING DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND NOTING THAT THAILAND COULD NOT COUNT ON US ASSISTANCE IN EVENT OF THAI-VIET NAM DISPUTE. THIS WEEK, BAN MUANG COLUMNIST "FREEMAN" NOTES CARTER'S DECLARATIONS IN SUPPORT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, ADDING THAT IF HE IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS STATEMENTS NO ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE "PROVIDED TO A GOVERNMENT THAT OPPRESSES ITS PEOPLE LIKE THE ONE IN VIETNAM."

4. PRESS PLACEMENT ALMOST NORMAL

USIS PRESS PLACEMENT HAS CLIMBED BACK NEARLY TO THE HIGH LEVEL IT MAINTAINED BEFORE THE OCTOBER 6 COUP.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

1. POST BEGAN A NEW SERIES OF LECTURES ON AMERICAN POLITICAL PROCESSES THIS WEEK WHEN PAT MARJORIE SMITH AND PROGRAM ASSISTANTS CHALERMPONG JAMERBSIN AND TERMSAKDI BHAEDDEE VISITED BAN UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 BANGKO 01008 131328Z

SOMDEJ TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGE IN THONBURI AND THE TTC IN PETBURI PROVINCE. USING THE SLIDES AND CHARTS PREPARED FOR THEIR PRE-ELECTION SERIES WHICH HAD BEEN INTERRUPTED BY LAST OCTOBER'S COUP, THE TEAM HAS ADDED A SECTION ON THE TRANSITION PERIOD, THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION, AND THE INAUGURATION DAY FESTIVITIES. THE LECTURE CONCLUDES WITH A SHOWING OF AGENCY-PRODUCED FILM PROFILE OF JIMMY CARTER. TEAM REPORTS CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION FROM COLLEGE INSTRUCTORS AND A VERY FRIENDLY AND ENTHUSIASTIC RECEPTION FROM THE STUDENTS (OVER 200 ATTENDED EACH LECTURE). INSTRUCTORS AT PETBURI TTC POINTED OUT IT WAS THEIR FIRST USIS PROGRAM IN EIGHT YEARS AND REQUESTED A RETURN VISIT ON SOME SUBJECT SOON.

2. LOCAL ECONOMISTS HAVE REACTED TO THE VTR ON NOBEL PRIZE WINNER MILTON FRIEDMAN WITH ENTHUSIASM. ON JANUARY 11, VTR WAS SHOWN TO A DOZEN HIGH LEVEL FACULTY MEMBERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AT THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (NIDA). AUDIENCE INCLUDED THE RECTOR, AND VICE RECTOR OF NIDA AND THE DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT ECONOMICS. EARLIER, THE TAPE

WAS SHOWN TO SOME 60 BANKERS AND ECONOMISTS AT THE CENTRAL BANK OF THAILAND. ADDITIONAL SHOWINGS ARE SCHEDULE.

3. U.S. CONSUL ANDREW ANTIPPAS DEALT WITH GENUINE THAI CONCERNS ABOUT TIGHTENED U.S. VISA PROCEDURES BEFORE AN INTERESTED AUDIENCE OF 200 AT AUA. FOLLOWING HIS EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION, ANTIPPAS SPENT MORE THAN AN HOUR ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM STUDENTS OBVIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CHANCES FOR A VISA FOR STUDY IN THE U.S.

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